



DRAFT



GCSE

GEOGRAPHY A

Following a successful pilot run with the Geographical Association, we have developed a lively and innovative specification in geography – Geography A. Students are encouraged to understand facts and figures about their environment as well as developing a caring attitude towards looking after it. They can develop geographical skills such as the use of GIS, enquiry and analysis through fieldwork and research.

What's happening to GCSEs?

OCR is offering new GCSEs for first teaching in September 2009*.

We've taken this opportunity to improve the quality of our GCSEs for teachers and learners alike.

We've made improvements in three key areas: updated and relevant content, a focus on developing students' personal, learning and thinking skills, and flexible assessment, so teachers can choose the best learning approach for the job.

We want to make the introduction of these new GCSEs as easy for you to manage as possible.

The main changes are:

- Controlled assessment will be introduced for most subjects
- The opportunity will be taken to bring course content up to date
- Examinations should provide opportunity for extended writing and more varied question types
- All GCSEs will meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Our approach is to provide consistency across all our GCSEs by offering the flexibility that unitised qualifications bring, allowing teaching and assessment in either a linear or unitised fashion.

*Not all GCSEs are changing. There are a few exceptions: the new Science GCSE was introduced in 2006. New English, English Literature, ICT and Maths GCSEs will be offered for first teaching in 2010.



Improving GCSE Geography A with OCR

We've involved teachers throughout the development process, so the new specifications, support materials and schemes of work should be exactly what you need to teach OCR GCSE Geography A. To ensure accuracy in our content, we've also consulted subject associations, professional membership groups, subject societies and other subject experts.



Our GCSE Geography A offers:

- The chance to look at geography from a new and exciting perspective – emphasis is on a range of issues facing today's society, e.g. sustainability, globalisation and uneven development. Students understand the relevance of geographical studies to their lives and to the real world
- The opportunity to engage students with modern content and the opportunity to use creative methods to present their work, e.g. cartoons, reflective journals, poems and videos
- Comprehensive support and pre-release materials from OCR so teachers can prepare their students fully.

Making change easy

We'd like to make these changes as easy for you to manage as possible. To minimise disruption, we will:

- Guide you through the process of moving to OCR
- Bring you the latest information through our Focus on 14–19 magazine and our new website www.GCSEchanges.com
- Show you approved specifications one year ahead of first teaching, so you have plenty of preparation time
- Offer you a range of OCR support materials, including schemes of work and sample assessment materials, as we did with GCEs
- Make OCR's publisher partner resources – tailored to the new specifications – available from January 2009
- Endorse a variety of published resources, giving you a wider choice of quality support materials.

We're also running extra INSET and training courses across the UK, so now it's even easier to discover how OCR has developed its specifications.

Controlled assessment

While reviewing GCSEs, QCA looked into the coursework element of the current qualifications and decided to introduce controlled assessment as an alternative to coursework. This will address some of the issues raised in recent coursework reviews, such as plagiarism.

Controlled assessment has to be done in a supervised environment. However, if the task has a research element, the student may complete this without supervision.



The benefits of controlled assessment include:

- More straightforward marking – for most subjects, we provide worksheets for students to complete
- Improved reliability and validity
- Varying levels of control, to help you manage the assessments and your time more easily
- Greater confidence in authenticating students' work as their own
- Greater ease in fitting assessments into your normal teaching programmes.

For GCSE Geography A, controlled assessment means:

- Task setting – One task must be selected from a number of tasks offered by OCR. These tasks can be used with a minimum amount of adaptation or they can be adapted to suit resources and can be made more relevant to centres' own environment or candidates.
- Task taking – OCR has provided clear guidance to centres within the specification regarding authenticity, feedback, time and collaboration control, and access to resources.
- Task marking – Centres use OCR marking criteria to mark the controlled assessment which is then forwarded to OCR for moderation. This external moderation will take the form of postal moderation, or e-moderation where evidence is required in a digital format.

We will review our controlled assessment tasks every year.

Flexible assessment

The assessment for the new OCR GCSEs is organised into units which can either all be taken at the end of the course in a linear fashion, or be used to complement a more unitised approach to teaching and learning. This gives you the flexibility to choose the assessment approach best suited to your centre and your students. A unitised structure gives you the flexibility to co-teach short and full courses.

We already offer assessments that are organised into units at A Level and for some existing GCSEs. For many subjects, assessments will be available twice a year. Flexible assessment means:

- You will have a choice of learning approaches – linear or unitised
- The assessment can be timed to match the point of learning within the course, making it easier for candidates to show what they know, understand and can do
- Students can re-sit a unit rather than repeat the entire assessment
- Some students are motivated by ongoing feedback and this helps them identify their learning needs
- A unitised approach makes it easier for students to stay on track with their studies and manage their time effectively
- The pressure of an 'all or nothing' assessment is removed
- Examination stress is reduced by permitting assessment over a longer period so that not all assessments are concentrated in a narrow window at the end of two years

- With a similar format to A Levels and Diplomas, GCSEs will help prepare students for the next phase of their education.

To ensure that the assessment supports the coherence of the GCSEs and there is no over-assessment, QCA has put two rules in place: 40% of the assessment must happen at the end of the course and only one re-sit of each assessment unit is allowed.

You may know 'unitised' as modular.

Unit title and description	Assessment including duration	Weighting
Unit A671: Extreme Environments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates study two contrasting environments: desert environment and one chosen from polar or mountain environment Where they are found, what they are like, how we use them and what challenges they pose for people. 	Written examination 1 hour Section A: Candidates are required to answer two structured questions based on the 'hot desert' areas Section B: Candidates are required to answer two questions based on their chosen extreme environment	25%
Unit A672: You as a Global Citizen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates must complete two pieces of work – at least one must involve primary data collection First piece - investigate how consumer decisions may have an impact on people, at a local or global scale Second piece – investigate a local retail area and assess the extent to which this area is sustainable and make suggestions to improve its future sustainability Presentation formats include poems, posters, video, oral and cartoons. 	Controlled assessment Externally moderated Tasks will rotate each year Work can be submitted electronically	25%
Unit A673: Similarities and Differences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates study a location in the UK that is special to them ('your place') and one non-UK city or region Links between the two locations should be identified and explored This unit includes 'How do you feel about your place?', 'How is it represented by others?' and 'What are the major issues affecting your place at the moment?' 	Written examination 1 hour	25%
Unit A674: Shaping our Fast- changing World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates will deal with identifying issues, effects and possible future scenarios Issues covered in this unit will be of global concern and could include population change, our changing planet, trade, aid and superpowers Resources for this unit are available in advance as a pre-release booklet. These may have a physical bias or human bias (or both) There will be a synoptic element to this unit – the skills required can be achieved through the teaching of the three other units and exposure to contemporary materials collected during the course. 	Computer-based test or written examination 1 hour	25%

Assessment objectives

Candidates are expected to demonstrate the following in the context of the content described:

AO1

- Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of places, environments and concepts.

AO2

- Apply their knowledge and understanding in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.

AO3

- Select and use a variety of skills, techniques and technologies to investigate, analyse and evaluate questions and issues.

OCR offers a range of support materials, developed following extensive research and consultation with teachers. We've designed them to save you time when preparing for the new specifications and to support you while teaching them.

Our support materials and events include face-to-face training courses, schemes of work that you can customise, endorsed publisher partner resources, access to teacher and examiner networks (both online and offline), plus an extensive past-papers service.

OCR's online resources include:

- E-communities – online networks of subject specialists for sharing knowledge, views and ideas
- Interchange – a completely free and secure website that helps you carry out the administrative tasks associated with examinations quickly and easily
- Past examination papers
- Marking schemes
- Subject e-alerts – for teachers who register for updates.

We offer a wide range of training courses in the UK, so you have easy access to information about our new specifications – direct from the experts. See opposite for more details.



Our Get Ready events offer a taste of the new specification. Dates are given below, and you can book your place now at www.GCSEchanges.com.

Later, we'll be running our Get Started events, which take you through the specification in more detail and help you work towards first teaching. They will take place during the spring and summer terms 2009.

Get Ready – introducing the new specification (first teaching from September 2009)*

This course is for all teachers – new and experienced – who are interested in finding out more about the new specification. It's open to you, even if you don't teach the current OCR specification.

It's a **FREE** half-day session, including refreshments, a light finger buffet and course materials, offering an overview of the new OCR specification in GCSE Geography A. Key features include:

- A look at the new structure, content and assessment methods
- A comparison between old and new specification content
- An introduction to the support and resources available from OCR
- A summary of the benefits of choosing the new OCR specification.

Date	Location	Course code
Wed 18 Jun 08 AM	Bristol	OGGA101
Mon 30 Jun 08 PM	York	OGGA104
Thurs 3 Jul 08 AM	Birmingham	OGGA105
Tues 8 Jul 08 PM	Manchester	OGGA108
Thurs 10 Jul 08 AM	London	OGGA109
Thurs 2 Oct 08 PM	London	OGGA112
Tues 7 Oct 08 AM	Birmingham	OGGA113
Mon 20 Oct 08 PM	Bristol	OGGA116
Tues 4 Nov 08 AM	Newcastle	OGGA117
Mon 10 Nov 08 PM	Nottingham	OGGA120
Fri 14 Nov 08 AM	Southampton	OGGA121
Tues 25 Nov 08 PM	Manchester	OGGA124
Thurs 4 Dec 08 AM	Nottingham	OGGA125
Tues 9 Dec 08 PM	Birmingham	OGGA128
Fri 12 Dec 08 AM	London	OGGA129
Tues 27 Jan 09 PM	London	OGGA132
Wed 11 Feb 09 AM	Birmingham	OGGA133

Please note:

- Free OCR Training courses will not incur any penalty fees however, so that we can offer your place to another delegate please notify us in good time of your course cancellation.
- Dates are subject to change so please ensure you read your booking confirmation and web updates as OCR Training cannot be held responsible for delegates who attend on an incorrect date.
- Courses throughout summer 2008 and autumn 2008 terms may be based on the draft specification.
- *The times of these courses may vary from the standard advertised time.
- Delegates may attend an AM only session, PM only session or both AM and PM sessions, where two different specifications are being covered on the same day.
- On your booking form, you must put course codes for all sessions you wish to attend, failure to do so may result in you being booked onto incorrect sessions.

Publishing support for GCSE Geography A teachers

We're working with publisher partner
Heinemann to provide further resources to
support teachers of the new specification.

Resource	Format	Samples available from
Student Book with Exam Café CD-ROM	Print and electronic	March 2009
Planning and Delivery Resource with CD-ROM	Print and electronic	March 2009



To find the latest information on published
resources, please visit [www.ocr.org.uk/
geography/newgcse](http://www.ocr.org.uk/geography/newgcse) and choose
published resources from the right-hand menu.



www.ocr.org.uk

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